Assistance to sugar industry

3901. SHRI BALAVANT ALIAS BAL APTE:

SHRI RUDRANARAYAN PANY:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that last year Central Government had earlier offered special assistance to sugar industry to help it out of the critical situation, manifest in accumulation of huge arrears of payments due to sugarcane growers in different States;

(b) if so, to which State such assistance was offered and to what extent; and

(c) whether such assistance was denied to principal sugar growing States, like Maharashtra, if so, the reasons therefor, indicating the contribution of Maharashtra and other States to the sugar production in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) In order to help the sugar factories to clear cane price arrears of 2002-03 sugar season, the Central Government had offered two schemes of financial assistance to the State Governments.

Ministry of Agriculture had allocated Rs. 678.06 crores as one time assistance to the Governments of U.P, Utaranchal, Bihar, Punjab and Haryana to help clear the sugarcane price arrears in respect of 2002-03 sugar season by private sugar factories in those States as per certain terms and conditions of the package. The States of Uttaranchal and Bihar have availed of the assistance to the tune of Rs. 45.54 crores and Rs. 18.85 crores resepctively. The Governments of U.P, Haryana and Punjab informed that the terms and conditions are not acceptable to them.

All sugar producing States have also been offered assistance by way of open Market Borrowings to help sugar factories to clear cane price arrears of 2002-03 sugar season subject to terms and conditions thereof. This assistance would be available to the mills in the Cooperative and Public Sectors in the States where the practice of State Advised Price (SAP) of sugarcane is prevalent and to all sugar mills in the States where

no such practice exists. The States of Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh have been permitted to raise open market borrowings of Rs.229.97 crores.Rs. 300.00 crores and Rs. 46.87 crores respectively.

(c) No State who has accepted the terms and conditions of the package has been denied assistance under these schemes.

Survey on impact of CPA

3902. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA:
SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have carried out any survey on the impact of the Consumer Protection Act on the consumer awareness and advocacy in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and whether Government are satisfied with the results thereof; and

(c) if not, whether Government are aware that the benefits of the Act have been considerably diluted for various reasons and if so,the steps proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The Consumer Protection Act, 1986 is rather the basis for creating awarenes among the consumers in the country to enable them to protect their interests. This is amply demonstrated by the fact that 23,76,479 cases have been filed by consumers in Consumer Forums set up under the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986. The majority of cases (85.22%) have already been decided.

(c) It's not true that the advantages and the benefits of the Act have been diluted. On the other hand, with the amendments made in the Act in the years 1991,1993 and 2002 the provisions of the Act has been further strengthened for facilitating quicker disposal of complaints, enhancing the capability of redressal agencies, strengthening them with more powers, stremlining the procedures and widening the scope of the Act to make it more effective and purposeful.